Oklahoma Chess Monthly

MARCH 2020

Chess News and Chess History for Oklahoma

Out of Africa (page 4)

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- Plus News Bites, Game of the Month, Puzzles, Top 25 List, Tournament Reports, and more.

Whitcomb Memorial Draws 47 Players for Charity

by Tom Braunlich

The Whitcomb Memorial ConSat chess event, held February 22 and 29, raised $800 for Bran's family while drawing 47 players to a hard fought event in Tulsa, OK, with many interesting games.

The late Bran Whitcomb, who passed away in May of last year, was one who always was full of ideas for enhancing traditional chess in this region. He was perhaps best known for his debates in chess politics, where he stood up for traditional chess values, but made quite a few enemies along the way. Those who knew Bran well knew that he loved to debate more than anything else, even more than chess itself. In social media, he would also jump into any discussion and take up a contrary position to

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the mainstream, just to be a devil's advoctate and 'stir the pudding' a bit. He enjoyed lively banter. But chess was his hobby and he had many good ideas for developing competition here, particularly for Grand Prix and Team events, which we hope to implement in the future.

Despite this, he seldom got to play due to the long work hours he had to put in to take care of a wife and six children.

As such, we felt the best way to honor him was a charity event to help out his family, and this ConSat event raised $800.

Ryan Amburgy continued his impressive play lately and scored 4-0 to win the Open section and raise his rating to 2149. ($150)

Ryan Amburgy

Even so, the spotlight of the event fell on bottom-ranked James Yanik who entered the Open Section at 1263. He defeated David Luscomb (2045) in the third round to get into a showdown with Amburgy in the final. The game was close, but Amburgy prevailed. Yanik's story is that of a former scholastic player who had a low rating and quit for 10 years, only to get back into the game after having played online and in clubs – essentially making him an 800-player whos real playing strength was at least 1000 points higher. He gained another 150 points in this event and is now well over 1400 "with a bullet." For this performance I selected James as "Player of the Month" (see page 6).

Coronavirus and Chess?
Something which may effect chess tournaments this Spring is the Coronavirus scare. Chris Amburgy said the issue has already been raised about holding the OSCO championship (March 7) in view of possible transmission of the disease in such large groups of kids. Chris said they plan to go forward with it, but later this Spring, depending upon how the scare pans out, we may see some events canceled. Be advised, and stay tuned.

Speaking of returning with strength after a layoff, the Reserve U1800 Section was won by Rafael Wesson (1565) who played in his first regular-rated event in about eight years, and won with a 3½ score ($150). Raf won with solid endgame play, winning even endgames with Istvan Szabad and Chris Amburgy in round 4. The victory was made sweeter since he mainly came out to honor Bran, who was a close friend.

Rafael Wesson (left) vs Chris Amburgy

Again regarding the theme of returning to chess after a long layoff, this event featured two long-time comebacks of note.

John Kees (1559) played in a tournament for the first time since 1994 (26 years)! But that wasn't even the record for this event, as he brought with him an old friend, John L. Cox (1410), who played for the first time since

1988, 32 years! Cox is 83 years old, but played back in the 1960s with Bela Rozsa and other past masters.

Both played well but were rusty, as you would expect, but said they would continue to play.

John Kees

John L. Lox

The Novice U1200 Section was the opposite story, being dominated by unrated players in their first event. It was won by Scott Hoadley, who scored a 4-0 sweep to earn a provisional rating of 1538, with nice solid play. He said he will be playing in more difficult sections in the future. The Novice section also featured good play by many young juniors under age 12 who performed well, including Liam Bond, Ashank Joshi, and Hanson Liu.

Scott Hoadley

One game from this event is on page 16, and more next month. The event was held at the Harvard Ave Baptist Church, and once again hosted wonderfully by Harold Brown Jr. TD was Tom Braunlich.

Chess and African Proverbs

by Tom Braunlich

Recently I read a book that featured at the head of each chapter an old African proverb. They were unique and rich in culture, and spoke to universal truths anyone could recognize.

I noticed how many of them could easily be applied to chess, and decided to explore that further. The result is this article… Enjoy.

"Wisdom is like a baobab tree; no one individual can embrace it." ~ Akan proverb.

"Wisdom," in chess terms, refers to mastery of the game. Although there have been many "masters" and "grandmasters" in chess competition, the truth of course is that no one has every really "mastered" the sport in the full sense of the word. Chess, like the *baobab* tree, is just too big to fully embrace its secrets. The wonderful and enticing thing about chess, however, is that although full mastery is impossible, our mind can come tantalizing close to that goal.

Chess is immense, but is not mind-bogglingly complex. It remains, always, just out of reach of the human mind. Sometimes you see people marketing 'superchess' games with more squares, more pieces, more complexity. The extra complexity does NOT improve the game. Chess is balanced with just the right amount of complexity. It is beyond us, but is yet close enough to constantly tantalize us!

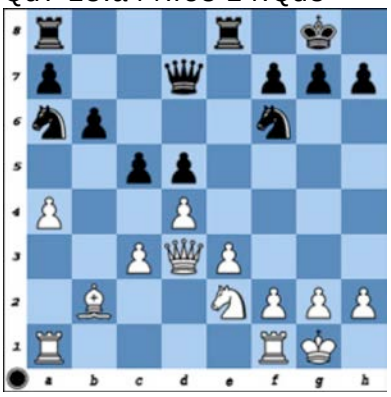
Each time we grasp that tree we come to appreciate the secrets of chess, and the further we reach around the trunk, the more beauty in it we feel. That's why chess makes such a great lifetime hobby and sport. It is a giant tree always standing strong, awaiting us to come play in its shade.

"A roaring lion kills no game." – Namibian proverb.

Relating this to chess, a 'roaring lion' could be considered a piece that is well posted deep inside your opponent's territory and looks proud and dangerous – but if the piece isn't actually affecting the play, and the opponent can maneuver around it, then it is "all bark and no bite" (to use a similar English saying).

A famous example of this that comes to mind is the game Botvinnik-Capablanca, AVRO, 1938, a rare clash between the two great champions:

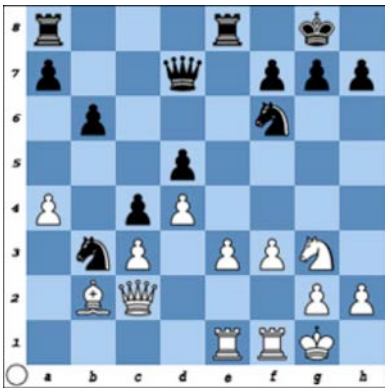
1.d4 Nf6 2.c4 e6 3.Nc3 Bb4 4.e3 d5 5.a3 Bxc3+ 6.bxc3 c5 7.cxd5 exd5 8.Bd3 O-O 9.Ne2 b6 10.O-O Ba6 11.Bxa6 Nxa6 12.Bb2 Qd7 13.a4 Rfe8 14.Qd3



14… c4?

Capablanca makes a subtle mistake in judgment. With this move he creates an outpost square on b3 and plans to move a knight there, where it will look like a lion, and it will cut off white's protection of his a-pawn as well. But Botvinnik has seen that this lion is only roaring, and can catch no game.

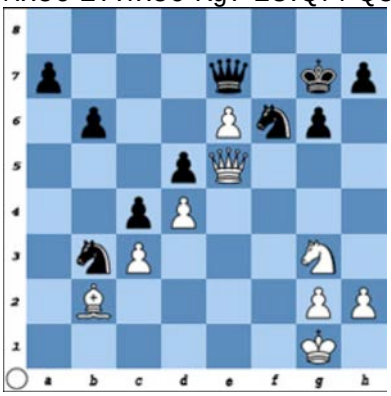
15.Qc2 Nb8 16.Rae1! (Already he is planning the sacrifice of his a-pawn with this move, and is seeing the coming variations.) Nc6 17.Ng3 Na5 18.f3 Nb3



The lion roars on b3!

He stands proudly on the cliff and is monarch of all he surveys! But he sees no prey, and has nowhere to go. White has prepared a brilliant pawn storm on the kingside…

19.e4! Qxa4 20.e5 Nd7 21.Qf2 g6 22.f4 f5 23.exf6 Nxf6 24.f5 Rxe1 25.Rxe1 Re8 26.Re6 Rxe6 27.fxe6 Kg7 28.Qf4 Qe8 29.Qe5 Qe7



Now comes one of the most famous combinations of all time… and please note the roaring lion lonely and irrelevant on its mountain perch on b3!

30.Ba3!! Qxa3 31.Nh5+! gxh5 32.Qg5+ Kf8 33.Qxf6+ Kg8 34.e7 Qc1+ 35.Kf2 Qc2+ 36.Kg3 Qd3+ 37.Kh4 Qe4+ 38.Kxh5 Qe2+ 39.Kh4 Qe4+ 40.g4 Qe1+ 41.Kh5 1-0

"Don't set sail using someone else's star."

Just because your best friend swears the Smith-Morra Gambit is crushing, it doesn't mean it is right for you.

"The fool speaks, the wise man listens." ~ Ethiopian proverb.

When you play a tournament game against a higher-rated player, especially if you lose it, you should invite him or her to discuss it in a post-mortem if there is time. However, do not use this precious time to talk about what you were thinking, or to make claims about how you should have won. Instead, listen to the opponent's thoughts and observations and ask good questions — and actually *listen* to the answers you get. So many of us, including me, use the post-mortem discussion to try to sooth our ego that we often don't even hear the great lessons that a few cogent observations from the better player can provide.

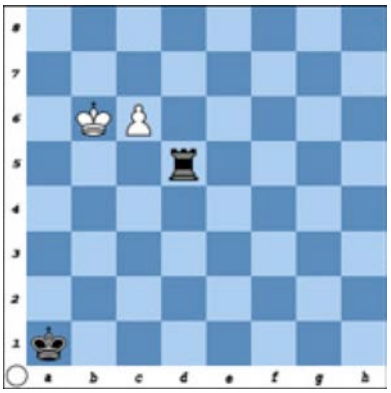
"Ears that do not listen to advice, accompany the head when it is chopped off." ~African Proverb.

See above! If you don't learn the lessons available from your games, you will continue to lose for the same reasons.

"What you help a child to love can be more important than what you help him to learn." ~African proverb.

Although there are many aspects about chess that people enjoy, the most important thing that is critical for any player is to love the game. You will never be any good at chess if you don't love it.

What is there to love about chess? I think it comes down to its surprising logical geometrical beauty, which can be found in the smallest of places. Take for example this puzzle, which is one of my favorites, the world famous Saavedra Position:



White to Play and Win

I offer this position as proof that 1) chess is as beautiful as any art if you have the ability to appreciate it, and 2) if you look at the solution and it doesn't make you cry out in

For MARCH 2020

Active Oklahoma Players				
	Player	This Month	Change	
1	Advait Patel	2537	0	
2	Jeffrey Haskel	2362	0	
3	Howard Zhong	2307	18	
4	Bart Gibbons	2217	0	
5	Tom Braunlich	2200	0	
6	Mark Hulsey	2199	0	
7	Ryan Amburgy	2139	18	
8	Chibuzo C Ilonze	2107	0	
9	Adonis Turner	2084	0	
10	Anthony Paolercio	2080	0	
11	Tom Patton	2077	0	▲
12	Veronika Zilajeva	2071	0	▲
13	Charles D Unruh	2063	0	▲
14	James Long	2053	0	▲
15	David Luscomb	2045	0	▲
16	Michael Nugent	2042	0	▲
17	Charles M Unruh	2033	0	▲
18	Matt Dalthorp	2029	-50	▼
19	Chuck Johnson	2010	0	
20	Jeff Colbert	2008	0	
21	Logan Zachare	1980	0	
22	Joe Dean Veal	1959	16	▲
23	Stephen Gehly	1958	0	▼
24	Charles Woodall	1937	0	
25	Paul Hodgden	1935	0	

Player of the Month

JAMES YANIK

The Comeback Kid continued his spectacular run up the rating hierarchy in the Whitcomb Memorial, see story page 2.

joy and love for chess then you are dead inside and should give up the game right now.

Just four pieces are on the board. And yet the solution is full of ideas and surprises.

If you haven't seen it before, try to solve it before continuing.

SOLUTION

White needs to queen the pawn without allowing black to draw by sacrificing his rook for it.

1. c7 Rd6+

This is the only way to temporarily stop white queening. Black sets two traps.

2. Kb5!

- If 2.Kc5? then Rd1 threatening a skewer via 3...Rc1! Black draws.
- If 2.Kb7? then Rd7 pins the pawn, and black captures next move to draw.

2... Rd5+

3. Kb4 (Again, if Kc4 then 3...Rd1!)

3... Rd4+ 4. Kb3 Rd3+ 5. Kc2!

Black's checks have come to an end, since black no longer has the ability to get "under" the king and skewer it. So is black done now?

5. ... Rd4!

No! Black sets a diabolical trap. If now white makes a queen, he gets only a draw after 6.c8=Q? Rc4+! 7.Qxc4 stalemate!

6. c8=R!

White makes a rook instead of a queen, which avoids the above stalemate idea and threatens 7.Ra8+ with mate instead!

6... Ra4

Black has to defend against the mate on the a-file.

7. Kb3!

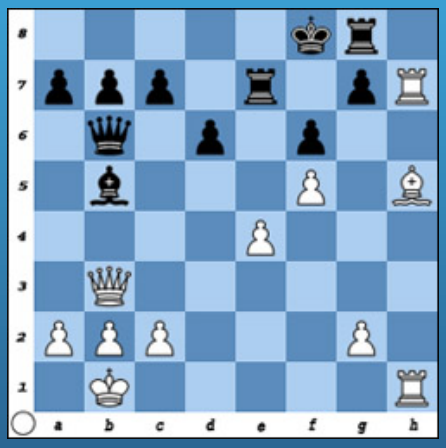
The final star move! White suddenly threatens Rc1 mate, as well as to take the rook! White wins.

"Wisdom is like fire. People take it from others." ~ Hema (DRC) proverb.

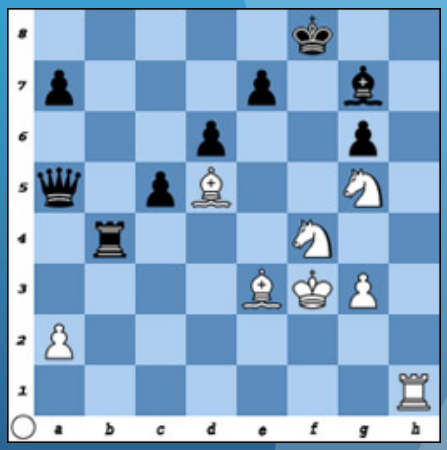
There is something to be learned in every chess game you play, or observe, or read in a book, or watch online. But to get out of the

PUZZLES

Answers Next Page



White to move and win. (Easy)



White to move and win. (Difficult)

game what is there to be learned, you have to *take* it. This means you have to think about it. Ask yourself, what happened in this game? Was the play random, or was there a story going on which one player understood and the other player didn't? Or was there a unique tactic used that you can look at more closely and store away in your memory bank of "patterns" for use some other day? To learn the lesson, you have to put thought into it, not just passively observe stuff. You take the fire.

"Knowledge without wisdom is like water in the sand." ~ Guinean proverb.

In chess terms, you could say this relates to the difference between "book knowledge" and experience. The classic example is a player who has memorized all the variations on the latest hot opening, but doesn't understand the reasons behind the moves, or the subtleties of the middlegame play and/or the types of endings that tend to come out of this opening.

We've all experienced this. We learn some new opening and know more about it than the opponent when it appears on the board. He or she soon plays something completely out of the book that must be bad – but we don't know why. We try to figure it out over the board, but use up lots of time, don't really get any advantage, and end up blundering in the time scramble ending.

This is what is meant by 'knowledge without wisdom' in the proverb.

Good players have some understanding of the *ideas* behind the chess openings; what each player is trying to achieve. If a move is played that is not considered by theory, it could be that it is bad because it doesn't stop you from pursuing the basic idea of the opening; which in turn tells you how to respond.

"The wise create proverbs for fools to learn, not to repeat." ~ African proverb.

In chess, 'proverbs' are the many axioms and rules-of-thumb that novice players learn to help them play the game. Examples are "Don't move a piece twice in the opening." Or "Castle early." These are helpful at first,

Answers to the Puzzles

(1) A series of spectacular sacs leads to a mate on the edge: 1. Qxg8+! Kxg8 2. Rh8+! Kxh8 3. Bf7+ mate.

(2) This is a good example of how many pieces can cooperate beautifully in attack. Here the three pieces beat the queen.
1. Nfe6+ Kg8 (Black can't escape to the queenside, because if 1...Ke8 2. Bc6 is mate) 2. Nc7+! (this move cuts off e8 as an escape square for black) 2... e6 (if 2...Kf8 3. Nh7#) 3. Bxe6+ Kf8 4. Nh7+ Ke7 5. Bg5+ Bf6 6. Bxf6 mate. (I unique and pretty mate.)

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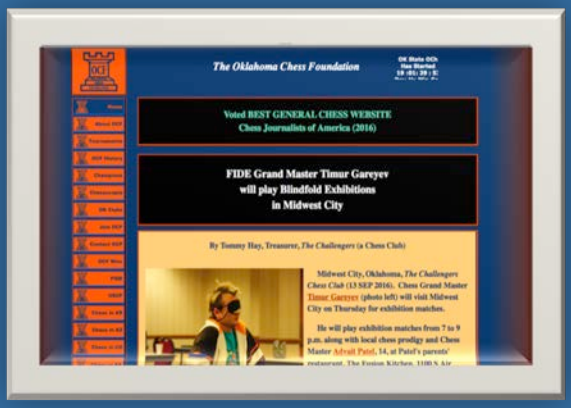
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... and more

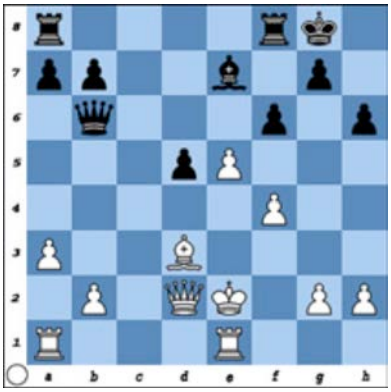
and the novice player relies on them.

But with experience comes the realization that sometimes the guidelines don't apply, or are overruled by a more important consideration. In fact, when you look at modern Grandmaster games, you see that they 'break the rules' all the time!

To master any subject, be it chess or any other field of human endeavor, first you 'learn the rules' then you learn when and how to 'break' the rules.

A clear example of this is this game, in which the world champion breaks the rules no less than four times in the first 12 moves:
Magnus Carlsen
Wesley So
Wijk aan Zee, 2017
1.Nf3 d5 2.d4 Nf6 3.Bf4 Bf5 4.e3 e6 5.c4!? Bxb1 6.Qxb1!? Bb4+ 7.Kd1

Rule broken: "Castle early."
Why did he do it? His move c4 allowed this possibility, but to take advantage of it Wesley had to give up bishop for knight (theoretical disadvantage), and expend two opening tempi (the bishop moved twice to capture an unmoved piece). Carlsen captured with the queen on b1 anticipating control of the e4 square, improving his play in the center.
For this Carlsen had to break a rule, and pays that price. Is it worth it? That's a matter of judgment. See how it turns out:
7… Bd6 8.Bg5
Rule broken: "Don't move a piece twice in the opening." Why did he do it? He doesn't want black to capture on f4 and ruin his pawn structure, and he doesn't want to capture himself on d6 and advance black's development. So he moves the piece and pins black's knight. To deal with this black will have to play …Be7 or …h6 at some point, which essentially gives back the lost tempo.
8… h6 9.Bxf6 Qxf6 10.cxd5 exd5 11.e4!
Rule broken: "Don't open lines in front of your king." Why did he do it? His Qxb1 move on move six set this up, and there is a tactical justification to the idea.
11…Be7
Tactical justification: If 11…dxe4 12. Qxe4 forks the king and the b7 square, winning material.
12.Bb5+!?
Rule broken: "Don't give your opponent free moves." Why did he do it? Carlsen wants to prevent black from developing his knight on c6. This move forces black to put a pawn there. Carlsen thinks that is worth a tempo.
12… c6 13.e5 Qf4 14.Bd3 c5
Wesley is also ambitious and fights for the initiative himself by following one of the rules: "Open lines in the center if your opponent's king can't castle."
15.dxc5 Nc6 16.Qc1 Qb4 17.a3 Qxc5 18.Ke2 Nd4+ 19.Nxd4 Qxd4 20.f4 O-O 21.Qd2 Qb6 22.Rhe1 f6
Wesley with this move looks to be opening lines and getting a great game, as would be the case if white captured on f6 now. Instead, Carlsen sacrifices a pawn just to keep the position closed. You could say that is also breaking a rule, but in this case it is strategic in nature. For the pawn he is able to safeguard his king and leave black with bad light square weaknesses on the kingside, and pieces which have little scope, while white gets an initiative.



23.e6! Qxe6+ 24.Kf3!
Rule broken: "Don't expose your king." Why did he do it? Carlsen sees that the king is actually safer here, and is also well posted near the center if an endgame comes – which might well happen if white wins the pawn on d5 soon and there are

exchanges there.
24… Qd7 25.Rad1 Rad8 26.Qe3 Bd6 27.Bg6 f5 28.Qe6+
Rule broken: "Don't trade queens when you are down material." Why did he do it? He has compensation for that pawn in the activity of his pieces, and he needs to prevent black from playing …Rf6 chasing away white's great B on g6.
28… Qxe6 29.Rxe6 Bc5 30.Re5 Rf6 31.Bxf5 Bd6 32.Rdxd5
Carlsen has actually won a pawn. Soon he goes on to win by sacrificing a piece for a bunch more black pawns and rolling them…
Kf7 33.Re4 g6 34.Bg4 h5 35.Bh3 Re8 36.Red4 Be5 37.Rb4 g5 38.g3 b6 39.Rd7+ Kf8 40.Rh7 g4+ 41.Bxg4 hxg4+ 42.Kxg4 Bd6 43.Rc4 a5 44.Rc6 Kg8 45.Rb7 Be5 46.Rcxb6 Rxb6 47.Rxb6 Bd4 48.Rb5 Re2 49.b3 Rxh2 50.Rxa5 Re2 51.Rd5 Bb2 52.a4 Bc3 53.Kf5 Re8 54.g4 Rf8+ 55.Ke4 Rb8 56.Rb5 Re8+ 57.Kd3 Be1 58.a5 Bf2 59.b4 Re3+ 60.Kc4 Re4+ 61.Kb3 Kf7 62.Re5 Rd4 63.b5 Rd3+ 64.Kc2 Rg3 65.g5 Bd4 66.Rd5 Be3 67.Rd3 Rg2+ 68.Kb3 Bc1 69.b6 Ke6 70.Rd4 Rb2+ 71.Ka4 Kf5 72.Rb4 Ra2+ 73.Kb5 Bxf4 74.Rxf4+ Kxf4 75.b7 1-0

"He who thinks he is leading and has no one following him is only taking a walk." ~ Malawian proverb.

I love this one. One thing about chess is that interesting thoughtful people get attracted to it, and such people tend to like to develop their own theories about how to play it, and go against convention. So you had many players who 'led the way' in developing the understanding of the game, players like Steinitz, Reti, Nimzovich, Botvinnik, etc.

But then you also get characters whose ideas were, shall we say, less effective. They were leaders who had no followers. Examples are Weaver Adams, who wrote "White to play and win." Hans Berliner, who wrote "The System," and others.

Such players don't have to even be masters like those two. Even club players can have strong ideas of their own. When I was young there was a player at the Tulsa Chess Club named Robert Ware who developed his own opening system, called the Ware Opening, which he played with either white or black and for which he published an openings book. The Ware opening was 1. f3 for white (or 1…f6 for Black against whatever white does).

His theory was that he would create the following setup with his first few moves:

1. f3, 2. g3, 3. Nh3 4. Nf2 5. Bg2 6.0-0:

The Ware setup.

He thought this setup was strong and solid. Mr. Ware was a hero from World War II and a very nice man. But his chess ideas were somewhat …flawed. Still, I always admired that he had the courage to 'walk his own path' even if no one else was following him.

(I wrote an interesting tribute to Mr. Ware for Frank Berry's OCQ about 15 years ago. I'll have to dig it out and reprint again, as it contains one of my best games!)

"An army of sheep led by a lion can defeat an army of lions led by a sheep." ~ Ghanaian proverb.

There are so many examples of this in chess I don't even need to quote one for you. 'Sheep' would be pawns or minor pieces, which frequently can beat the queen and rook 'lions' if the circumstances are right.

See page 16 below for the game Scott Hoadley – Clara Ford with Rook+Bishop vs Six Pawns!

You cannot build a house for last year's summer. — Ethiopian proverb.

This one is very reminiscent of the famous Greek proverb by the philosopher Heraclitus, who in the sixth century BC said, "No man ever steps in the same river twice, (for it's not the

same river and he's not the same man.)"

This relates to chess in several ways. One is in the realm of game preparation. When I was at university in 1979 and rated an expert, there was a local high-school student with a Class A rating who hung out at the university's chess club, and who was always trying to beat me and seldom did.

One time he prepared a trap for me in a certain opening he knew I played. I fell into the trap and he got an edge, but he didn't follow it up right and eventually he lost.

So, at home he studied what he did wrong in this game, and came well prepared to win now when he tried it on me again. He repeated the same line, but of course I was wary and deviated earlier, got a good game, and won.

He came prepared for a third game with an improvement over game two. I had anticipated his improvement and beat him to the punch.

So, he was always preparing for the previous game that was already done — building his house for last year's Summer, trying to step into the same river twice.

Home preparation is a reality of modern chess, especially for those who reach expert level and above. But remember, your opponent will be preparing too. You have to anticipate that as well.

"A bird that flies off the earth and lands on an anthill is still on the ground." — Igbo proverb.

I am not sure what this one means, but I like it! Maybe you can give me an example of this from one of your games!?

See "Upcoming Tournaments" Page for info.

Top 25 List

I sometimes get questions about the Top 25 list I publish here every month. Some prominent players aren't on the list. Why?

It is a list of only "Active" Oklahoma players, which I arbitrarily define as activity within about the last 2 years.

Some top players whose names used to be on this list before but have fallen off of it are NM **Sergey Galant** (2188), **John Cope** (2084), **Joshua Alexander** (2143), **George Trammell** (2077). **Alan Islas** (2024).

Other Okies like NM **Robert Harrington** (2189) NM **D. Ballard** (2180) and NM **Tom Amburn** (2200) have been inactive for years but would pop onto the list as soon as they play a game.

If you want a full list of all the players who are both active AND inactive, you can generate one easily from the USCF website. Go to this link:
http://www.uschess.org/datapage/top-players.php

And select from among the options to generate lists of various kinds for all states.

OTHER TOP LISTS

In view of the above notes, and since the OCM has many readers in Kansas and Arkansas which don't have state magazines, I thought it might be interesting to produce some top lists here for those states.

At right are two such Top 10 lists generated from the above USCF website.

Top 10 Arkansas Players Active Within the Last 2 Years

1	WALDEMAR ORTIZ	2222
2	WILLIAM R ORTON III	2214
3	TERRY ANDERSON	2095
4	STEVEN BELLISARIO	2035
5	DENNIS CUMMINGS	2000
6	DAVID PHILLIPS	1992
7	PETER PRITCHETT	1952
8	CHENGYUE (OSCAR) SHE	1946
9	CHUMA IKEORHA	1937
10	JOSH PRUETT	1930

Top 10 Kansas Players Active Within the Last 2 Years

1	GM TIMUR GAREYEV	2694
2	GM CONRAD HOLT	2626
3	JACK EASTON	2313
4	FM JOEY MICHAEL KELLY	2245
5	WCM SHEENA ZENG	2179
6	EDVIN BOWEN	2134
7	SHO GLASHAUSSER	2129
8	KEVIN XU	2115
9	WIM LUIDMILA A MOKRIAK	2083
10	RAHUL MANOHAR MEPPAR	2070

SOUTHWEST CLASS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Three local players did quite well at this strong annual tournament in Dallas.

In Class A Joe Dean Veal (1959) scored 5-2 and Jason Wawrzaszek (1998) scored 4½.

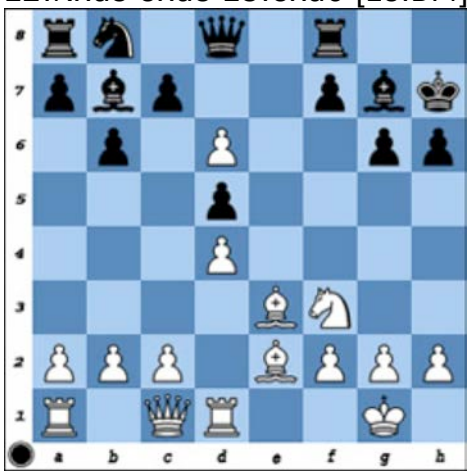
In Class B, Adley Bufford totaled 5-2 to tie for 3rd place and raise his rating to 1753.

In Class C, Preston Koloen tied for 5th place with 5-2 and leapfrogged his rating entirely over the 1400s to 1522. Oliver Ohly of Kansas also scored 5-2.

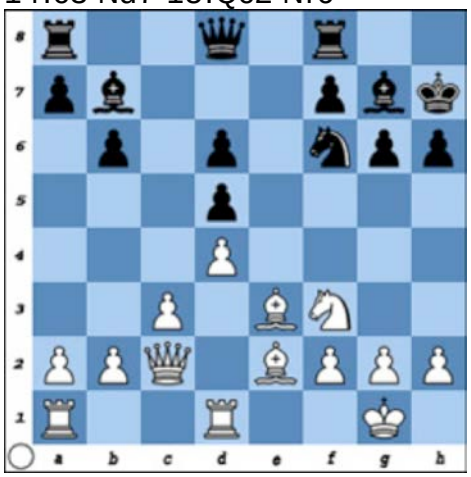
Ryan Amburgy played up into the master section 4½ to raise his rating to 2139, while NM Jack Easton of KS scored 5/9.

Ryan Amburgy has been hot lately and sends notes to this nice game, which I liked enough to make Game of the Month:

Amburgy, Ryan (2121)
Parker, Anthony (2208)
Southwest Class (4), 14.02.2020 [B08]
[Amburgy, Ryan]
1.d4 d6 2.e4!?
The Pirc, an opening which I haven't played in the past but have looked at as a way to refute 1.. d6.
2...Nf6 3.Nc3 g6 4.Nf3 Bg7 5.Be2 0-0 6.0-0 e6!?
Definitely not something I was expecting. [6...c6 Is the main move, after which 7.a4! Guarantees an edge. 7...Nbd7 8.h3 Qc7 9.Be3 e5?! *(9...b6* Is better, but white still has a good edge after. *10.Qd2 Bb7 11.Rfe1≤)* 10.dxe5 dxe5 11.Bc4± And in this main line, white already has a BIG advantage.]
7.Bg5?!
This isn't best. I wanted to provoke h6, but I don't need to. [7.Bf4 Nc6 8.Qd2± With a horrible position for black. White has all the space, all the development, and all the plans.]
7...h6 Now black is ok.
8.Be3 b6 9.Qc1!?
I didn't like the d2 square and I wanted the d file for my rook. [9.Qd2 Kh7 10.e5 This didn't actually need to be prepared! 10...dxe5 11.Nxe5≤]
9...Kh7
[9...Ng4 10.Bf4 g5!? Might have been problematic with the queen on d2, but here I simply have. 11.Bd2!± h3 followed by h4 is coming with effect]
10.Rd1 [10.e5!? Is again possible.]
10...Bb7 11.e5 Nd5!?
Not best, but ok. [11...dxe5! To my surprise, this is possible! 12.dxe5 Nfd7≤ This is double edged and I can't really speak of more than a small advantage here.]
12.Nxd5 exd5 13.exd6 [13.Bf4]

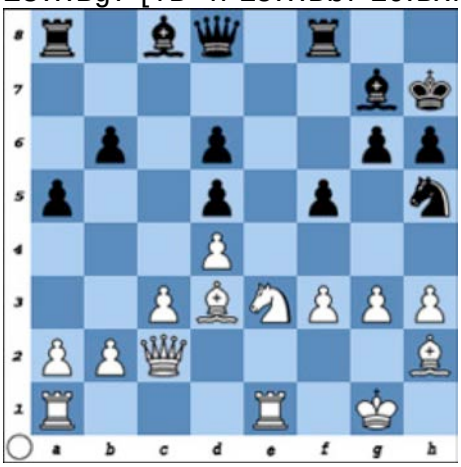


13...cxd6?!
This is a positional blunder. (TB- Sometimes the doubled d-pawns can be good as they control a lot of central squares. But since they are a long-term weakness black needs to have active piece play, which is not the case here. Both black bishops are bad, and practically the only piece he can do anything with is the knight. Ryan does a good job of keeping the knight corralled.)
[13...Qxd6 Is a lot better. 14.Bf4 Qd8 15.c3≤]
14.c3 Nd7 15.Qc2 Nf6

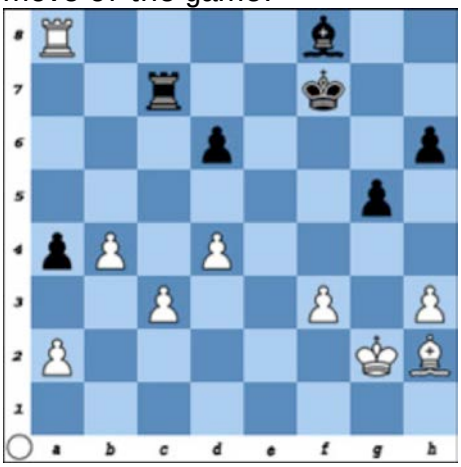


16.Nd2±
Preparing to meet Ne4 with f3. White is already close to winning here.
16...Bc8 17.Bd3 Ng4!?
A waste of time, but the position is already bad. [17...a5± Is probably best. That bishop on d3 needs to be removed via Ba6.]
18.Bf4 f5 19.h3!

Correct pawn! [19.f3?! Nf6 Gives black some hope as here the king is more exposed and g5 might come at some point.]
19...Nf6 20.Re1 a5 21.f3
NOW this is good. I want to play Nf1 and Ne3 but play this move first to prevent Ne4 forever. [21.Re2± Is another good improving move.]
21...Nh5 22.Bh2 Bf6 23.Nf1 Bh4 24.g3 Bf6 25.Ne3+-
Now white has executed his plans and he is just winning, as d5 is indefensible.
25...Bg7 [TB- if 25...Bb7 26.Bxf5]



26.g4!
My favorite move of the game! White doesn't rush to take on d5 and instead rips black entirely open. [26.Nxd5?! Bb7 Forces white to find 27.Ne7! *(27.Ne3?! Bxf3-* Is now very complex*)* 27...Bxf3 28.g4!+-]
26...Nf6 [26...fxg4 27.Bxg6++-]
27.gxf5 g5 28.Qb3
Now black loses d5 as well.
28...Ra7 [28...Bb7 Tries to save the pawn, but it loses the other pawn after. 29.Qa3+-]
29.Nxd5 It's over here 29...b5 30.Nxf6+ Rxf6 31.Re3 Raf7 32.Qxb5 Bxf5 33.Rae1 Bf8 34.Re6 Kg7 35.Rxf6 Qxf6 36.Qxf5 Qxf5 37.Bxf5 Rxf5 38.Kg2 Rb5 39.b3 a4 40.b4 Rb7 41.Re8 Kf7 42.Ra8 Rc7 Now for the final nice move of the game.



43.Rxf8+!
My opponent played until checkmate, but I will spare you. 1-0

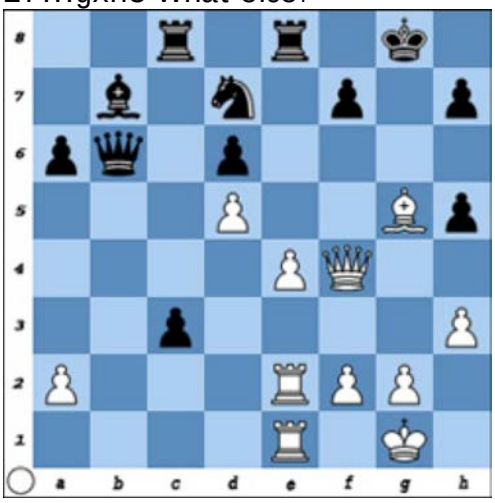
The general scene at the Southwest Class Championship, February 2020.

(Photo by Jim Hollingsworth)

Parasuraman, Surya (2142)
Amburgy, Ryan (2098)
Cardinal Open, 26.01.2020 [C92]
[Amburgy, Ryan]
1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bb5 a6 4.Ba4 Nf6 5.0-0 Be7 6.Re1 b5 7.Bb3 d6 8.c3 0-0 9.h3 Bb7
The Ruy Lopez Zaitsev Variation, a sideline which I am very comfortable with [9...Na5 10.Bc2 c5 11.d4 Is the main Ruy Lopez line, but i'm not a fan of it.] 10.d4 Re8 11.Nbd2 Bf8
A key move in the Zaitsev. This move allows the bishop to get out of the rooks way and eventually find it's way to g7. Without Bf8, black doesn't really have a great way to proceed (11.. Nd7!? is a decent alternative). 12.Bc2 g6 13.Nf1?!
A small inaccuracy that allows black to gain the bishop pair. [13.d5 Nb8 14.b3 c6≤ Is the mainline here. White has a slight edge, but no more.]
13...exd4! 14.cxd4 Nb4= Now black gains the bishop pair as moving the bishop away will lose the e4 pawn. Black is no worse than equal here, and probably has a tiny edge. 15.Ng3 Nxc2 16.Qxc2
I didn't know anything by memory beyond this point, so I spent some time calculating. (Show current position here?)
16...c5 17.d5 Bg7 18.Bf4 Qb6 19.Qd2 Nd7 20.Bh6N
Interestingly, we were following a database game until this move. [20.Rac1 c4 21.Bh6 Was Popovic vs Gligoric 1987. Both these players were GMs.]

20...Bf6 This was an interesting decision. I didn't want to go back to h8 because I though White would get a great attack with Nf5. [20...Bh8 21.Nf5 With a scary attack. Just an example of how I could lose here. 21...c4?? *(21...Ne5 22.Nxe5 Bxe5≤; 21...gxf5?? 22.Qg5+ Bg7 23.Qxg7#)* 22.Be3! Qc7 23.Nh6+ Kf8 24.Ng5+-]
21.Re2 [21.Bg5 If he tried to repeat, THEN I would have gone. 21...Bh8= Now there are no Nf5 threats and I am fine.] 21...c4 22.Qf4 Rac8 23.Rae1 b4 Here I try and push my pawns, but he gets a big attack in return. 24.Ng5 c3!?
Not yet the worst, but I am teetering on the brink of destruction. [24...Qd8! Is the good, safe move I need to make. 25.Qxd6!? Nc5! 26.Qxd8 Rexd8≥ For the pawn, black gets nice compensation in the form on the monster knight that jumps to d3.] 25.bxc3 bxc3? The mistake, though even my computer takes a long time to realize why this is bad. [25...Rxc3 26.Nh5 Bxg5 27.Qxg5 *(27.Bxg5? gxh5 28.Re3* Doesn't work in this case, as the black rook controls the 3rd rank. Therefore, white can't win with Rg3 and black can play. *28...Qd4-+)* 27...Qd8] 26.Nh5 Bxg5?!
This is objectively a losing move, but it's only because of a very specific line. [26...Qd8 27.Re3! A pretty inhuman line. *(27.Nxf6+ Qxf6 28.Qc1≤* With a big advantage still is probably more human. c3 is weak and black still is under attack but he can for sure defend here.*)* 27...c2 *(27...Qe7 28.Nxf6+ Qxf6 29.Qxf6 Nxf6 30.Rf3! c2 31.Rxf6! c1Q 32.Rxc1 Rxc1+ 33.Kh2+-* Not very human, but black is crushed here.*)* 28.Rc1 Re5 29.Nxf6+ Qxf6 30.Qg3±

Black is under a big attack and will inevitably will lose c2, but he's probably still holding.] 27.Bxg5! A smart move, but you have to see the full idea, which my opponent did not. 27...gxh5 What else?



28.Bf6??

A terrible blunder. I don't know why white didn't play Re3, even if it didn't work. Because everything else CLEARLY loses!

[28.Re3! Is completely winning. Here is a list of lines. 28...Re5 *(28...Qd4 29.Rg3 Kh8 30.Qxf7+-; 28...Ne5 29.Bf6!+-* No defense against Qh6 and Qg7#*)* 29.Rg3 *(29.Bh6?!* While this move isn't best, even this holds a close, maybe even still decisive advantage. *29...f6 30.Qg3+ Kf7 31.Qg7+ Ke8 32.f4!* Admittedly pretty inhuman. *32...Re7 33.Qg8+ Nf8 34.Qxf8+ Kd7 35.Qxf6+-* And while the game isn't over here, white is probably winning with best play.*)*

29...Kf8 This is the idea I had counted on during the game. I looked at many lines, but saw no advantage for white. However, there is a move. 30.Bh4!!+- Just kills. (TB-- This is because if black continues 30...Ke8 31.Rg8+ Nf8 32.Qf6! threatens Rxf8+.)]

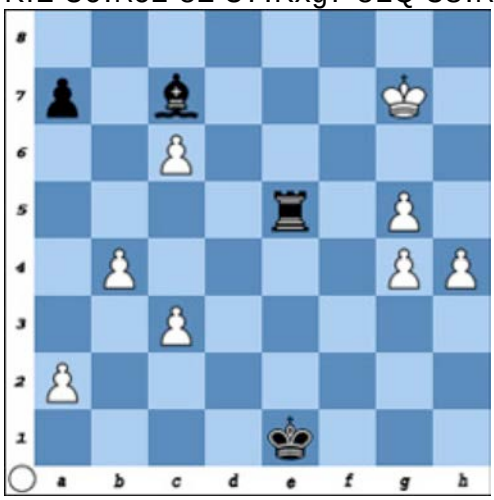
28...Nxf6-+

Now I am totally won and win with no further issues.

29.Qg5+ Kf8 30.Qh6+ Ke7 31.e5 dxe5 32.Rxe5+ Kd7 33.Qg7 Bxd5 34.Rxd5+ Nxd5 35.Qxf7+ Kc6 36.Re6+ Rxe6 37.Qxe6+ Kc7 38.Qxd5 Kb8 39.Qe5+ Ka8 40.Qd5+ Qb7 41.Qd3 c2 0-1

Hoadley, Scott
Ford, Clara [C54]
Whitcomb Memorial ConSat, 22.02.2020
[TB]

1.e4 e5 2.Nf3 Nc6 3.Bc4 Bc5 4.c3 Nf6 5.d3 d6 6.h3 0-0 7.Bg5 Be6 8.Bxe6 fxe6 9.Qb3 d5 10.exd5 exd5 11.Qxb7 Na5 12.Qb5 Bb6 13.Nxe5 Qe8 14.Qxe8 Rfxe8 15.d4 Nc4 16.f4 Ne4 17.0-0? [17.Nxc4! Ng3+ 18.Ne5 Nxh1 would be the main line, and quite interesting.] 17...Nxg5 18.fxg5 Rxe5ñ+ 19.b3 Nd6 20.h4 Rf8 21.Rxf8+ Kxf8 22.Nd2 Ne4 23.Kh2 Rf5? [23...Re7-+ should be an easy win.] 24.Nxe4 dxe4 25.Re1 c5!? Otherwise white is okay, getting 3 pawns for the piece. 26.dxc5 Bc7+ 27.Kh3 Re5?! [27...Rxc5! 28.Rxe4 Rxc3+ 29.Kg4 Rg3+-+] 28.b4 Ke7 29.Re3 Ke6 30.Kg4 h5+ 31.Kxh5 Kf5 32.g4+ Kf4 33.Re1 e3 34.c6 Kf3 35.Kg6 Kf2 36.Rc1 e2 37.Kxg7 e1Q 38.Rxe1 Kxe1



Six pawns vs Rook+Bishop. Which is stronger? Here it is the pawns! 38...Rxe1 would have been better, saving a tempo and perhaps allowing black chances to draw.

39.g6! Re4 40.h5 Rxg4 41.h6 Be5+ 42.Kf7 Rf4+ 43.Ke7?

[43.Ke6! wins]

43...Bf6+

[43...Rg4! might draw 44.g7 Bxg7 45.c7 Rc4! 46.hxg7 Rxc7+ 47.Kf8 Rc8+ 48.Kf7 Kd2 49.c4 Kc3!=] 44.Ke6 Bxc3 45.g7 Rf6+ 46.Kd7 Rg6 47.c7 Bxg7 48.c8Q Bxh6 [Loses immediately but it is also hopeless after 48...Rxh6 because black will lose the a-pawn soon and the pawns will roll.] 49.Qe8+ Kd2 50.Qxg6 1-0

UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS

For More Tournament Info Visit the USCF Tournament Site:
www.uschess.org/tlas/upcoming.php

MAR 7-8 FOUR STATES WINTER OPEN Joplin MO

Sat: 4-SS, G/60 d5. Sun: 4-SS, G/20,+3 and 4-SS, G/5,+3. Hilton Garden Inn, 2644 E. 32nd St., Joplin, MO 64804. Sat: 2 Sections, Open: $120-80, U1600 60, U1400: $60-40. 4.0 Bonus: $20.. Sun: Quick and Blitz one section each $75, $50, U1600 $30, U1400 $20. Prizes: b/25 full-paid entries. EF: $50 for both days, $40 Sat only, $20 Sun only. $10 discount for preregistration. K-12 players 50% entry, play for rating only; MCA membership required, OSA Reg.: 8-9. Sat: 9:30-11:45-2:30-4:45. Sun:1st round 9:30 Byes: One 1/2 point bye if requested before round 2 Ent: martin.stahl@joplinchess.org with cash on-site, paypal.me/joplinchess. Joplin Chess Club, 2609 New Hampshire, Joplin, MO 64804. Cks payable to Martin Stahl. Info: joplinchess.org, 417-483-1554.

MAR 14 QUADZILLA Oklahoma City OK

Sat: 4-RR "Quads" round robin. (NOTE: Players may adjust their rating +-100 for pairing purposes.) G/60,d5. LOCATION: Venue is a private home near downtown Oklahoma City. Address provided via email to registered players. Advance Registration is required – send email to Rebecca@youthchessok.org. EF: $20 +$5 (cash only) deposit that you'll get back if you play all three rounds. PRIZES: $40 to 1st place in each quad (split evenly in case of ties for first). BYES: No byes. SCHEDULE: Check in between 10 and 10:15. Round 1 at 10:30. Subsequent rounds at 2 and 4:30 unless both players wish to start earlier.

MAR 27-29 MID-AMERICA OPEN St. Louis MO

5-SS. Six Sections with large prizes. See details online here:
http://www.uschess.org/tlas/upcoming.php?CAT=GP#42271

APR 18 18th RED RIVER SHOOTOUT Davis OK

"The annual team match between the most fanatical chess players in Oklahoma and Texas."

Don't miss this annual fun tournament, in which all Oklahoma and Texas players — of all ratings — are eligible to join their team.
Sign up quickly, as team slots are filling up. Contact your team captain:

Oklahoma —	Phil Stegall	stegali@aol.com
Texas —	Troy Gillispie	tgillisp@ymail.com
Inquiries —	Rebecca Rutledge	rebecca@youthchessok.org

Location: Treasure Valley Casino (Meeting Room), I-35 & Hwy 7, Davis OK.
Hotel: Special chess rate of $89.10 (no extra taxes or fees) is available at the hotel. (580)369-3223.
To play in the Match Section, you must register with your Team Captain no later than Sunday, 12 April 2020 at HIGH Noon. The Team Captains will review and approve the Team Rosters with the Chief TD. The official Team Match Pairings will be final on Wednesday, 15 April 2020. The rosters will be announced the day of the tournament. Your best chance for getting on the team is to ensure your USChess membership is current through 30 April 2020 (or later) and REGISTER with the Chief TD and your Team Captain EARLY.

SIDE EVENTS include Texas Hold'em tournament (Friday night), Blitz and Bughouse tournaments, and a group dinner at the hotel restaurant. INFO: http://rrsochess.net/rrso_home.html

By IM John Donaldson

REVIEW:

Three New Books by Quality Chess

Three new books by the Scottish firm Quality Chess (www.qualitychess.co.uk) illustrate why it is the best at what it does. Each one features a top notch author, a well-chosen topic as well as easy to read layouts and first-rate paper and binding. The concern for getting everything right even extends to careful proofreading, often overlooked by other publishers.

If you have ever wondered what it's like inside the team of a participant in a World Championship match wonder no longer. Michiel Abeln's *The Anand Files: The World Championship Story 2008-2012* (2019, 512 pages, hardcover, $40) provides a front row seat to Viswanathan Anand's battles with Vladimir Kramnik, Veselin Topalov and Boris Gelfand through interviews, game analysis, reporting and more.

Abeln had the cooperation of Anand plus his principal team of Grandmasters Peter Heine Nielsen, Rustam Kasimdzhanov, Surya Ganguly, and Radek Wojtaszek and their comments are revealing, to the extent one suspects this book could not be published until now as Vishy was still competing for the World Championship in 2018. Although Anand is still rated in the top 15 in the world in early 2020, a remarkable achievement for a player who recently turned 50, his days battling for the crown appear to be over.

One thing that comes across front and center in Abeln's book is just how hard top professionals work these days. Powerful computers loaded with huge databases of games and strong chess engines are both a blessing and a curse and Anand's team seemed to always be running a sleep deficit during his World Championship matches. One of the biggest jobs of Vishy's helpers was trying to find ways to present huge amounts of analysis in such a way he could remember it. Chess has been transformed the past three decades.

The Anand Files: The World Championship Story 2008-2012 is the rare chess book that can be enjoyed by a wide audience from the armchair warrior to the hard core professional.

Sample pages for this beautifully produced hardcover book with color photos can be found at:

https://www.qualitychess.co.uk/ebooks/AnandFiles-excerpt.pdf

Sam Shankland's *Small Steps 2 Success: Mastering Passed Pawn Play* (2019, 358 pages, hardcover, $35) is another book that should appeal to a wide audience. The 2018 U.S. Champion's first book, *Small Steps to Giant Improvement*, received critical acclaim and his new work, packed with loads of instructional material, helpful tips and exercises, should as well.

Here are a couple of tips the three-time U.S. Olympiad team member offers:

When facing connected passed pawns that cannot be blockaded, the best strategy tends to be to throw everything at another part of the board, be liberal about sacrificing, and do whatever it takes to smash through before the pawns spell your doom.

If you need to keep a passed pawn blockaded, one of the best things you can do is to aim to make piece trades that lessen your opponent's ability to fight for the blockading square.

A protected passed pawn's value in the endgame is significantly higher than it is in the middlegame. If

you have a protected passer in the middlegame, your best strategy is often to try to simplify towards an ending.

Small Steps 2 Success: Mastering Passed Pawn Play is aimed primarily at players rated 1800 on up. An excerpt can be found at: https://www.qualitychess.co.uk/ebooks/SmallSteps2Success-excerpt.pdf

One thing all chess players agree on is that the Najdorf Sicilian is a good opening for Black. It's no accident it was the primary weapon of Bobby Fischer and Garry Kasparov and today Maxime Vachier-Lagrave.

While the Najdorf may have a great pedigree, it also has a reputation as being complicated and requiring tremendous theoretical knowledge. While there is no free lunch in chess, American International Master David Vigorito, in *Playing the Najdorf: A Practical Repertoire* (2019, 544 pages, paperback, $31.95), makes the case that learning this opening is not as daunting as it might seem.

One-way Vigorito eases Black's learning curve is by adopting a "pure" Najdorf approach whenever possible. This means setups with …e5 against 6.Be2, 6.Be3, 6.f4, 6.g3, 6.h3, 6.a4, 6.Bd3, 6.Rg1, 6.Qe2 and 6.a3. Only against 6.Bg5 and 6.Bc4 and a few sidelines like 6.Qf3, Qd3 and 6.Nb3, does Black hold back on advancing his e-pawn two squares.

Another way the author makes this book more accessible is by including a large amount of explanatory prose. This is a big book, well over 500 pages, which enables Vigorito to explain things without leaving out theoretically significant material. Despite the serious subject matter this book is very readable.

A careful study of *Playing the Najdorf: A Practical Repertoire* will reward both the experienced practitioner of this defense and newcomers from 1800 on up. This book will be especially useful for young players who have played 1.e4 e5 as Black and picked up the basic opening principles, and who are now looking to branch out and learn a good opening that can be a part of their repertoire for the rest of their career.